



West Potrillo Mountains Grassland Restoration Project:

Recipient of the 2011 NM Chapter of the Society for Range Management's
"Excellence in Range Management" Award



Background:

In the summer of 2009, the Renewable Resources Division at the Las Cruces District Office of the BLM proposed to treat nearly 27,000 acres of creosote invaded grasslands near the West Potrillo mountain range in southwest Doña Ana County. This was to be completed in three phases over 7 years. From its inception, this project was a collaborative effort of the BLM, the grazing permittee, other federal and state government agencies, conservation and sportsman's groups. An environmental assessment was completed in July of 2010 and work on the first of three phases of the treatment was slated to begin later that year.

The overall objective of this project is to return plant composition, distribution, and abundance within vegetative communities targeted for treatment, to within the natural range of variability for the ecological sites that occur within the project area.

Thanks to partnership funding, as well as additional BLM funds, funding was secured to accomplish the entire treatment in 2010. In December of 2010, 26,300 acres were treated with the pelleted herbicide tebuthiuron on the West Potrillo grazing allotment. The livestock operator Mr. Dudley Williams, was able to facilitate all three phases of the treatment at one time by adjusting his management to allow for required post treatment growing season deferment for two years following treatment.

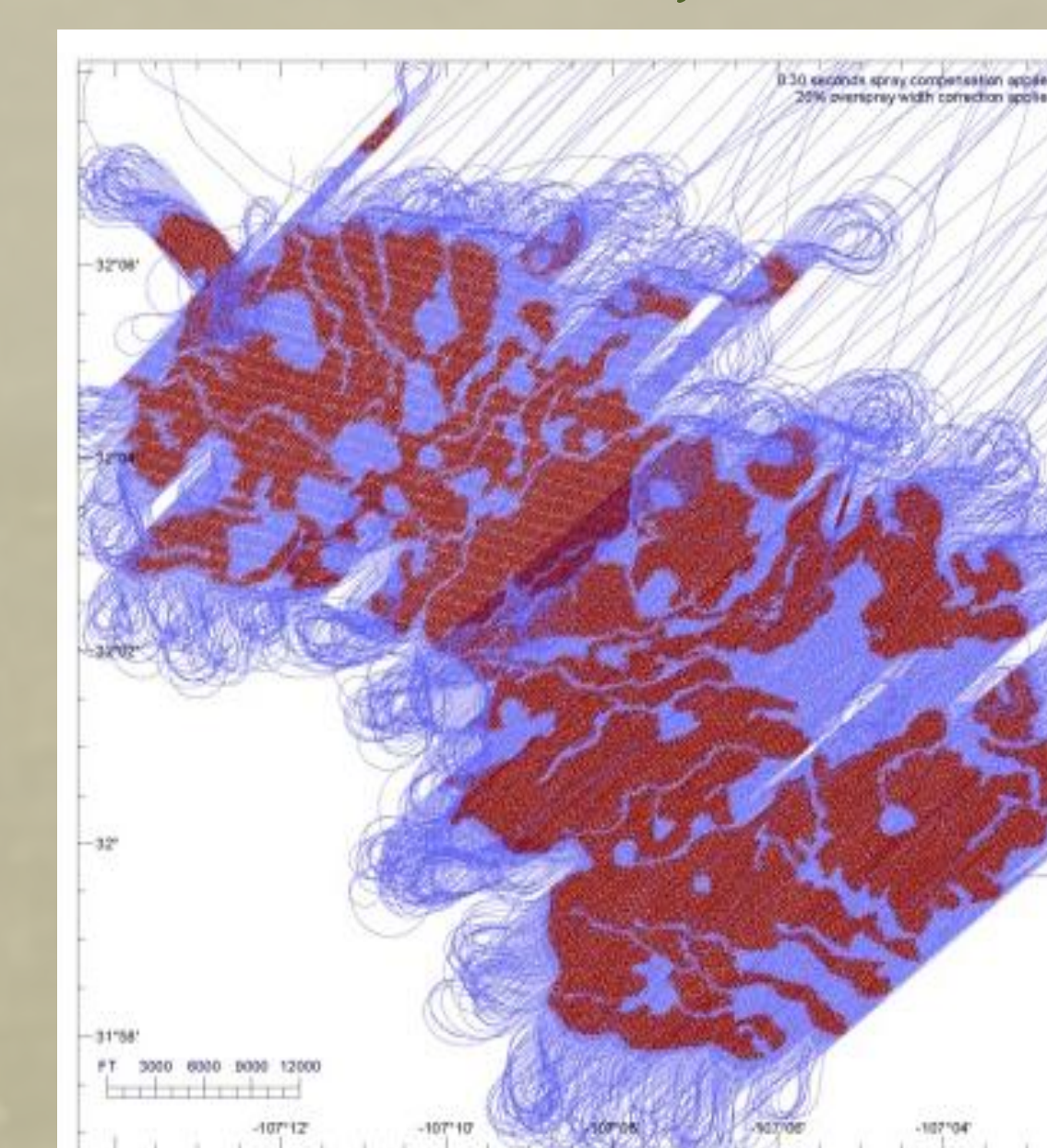
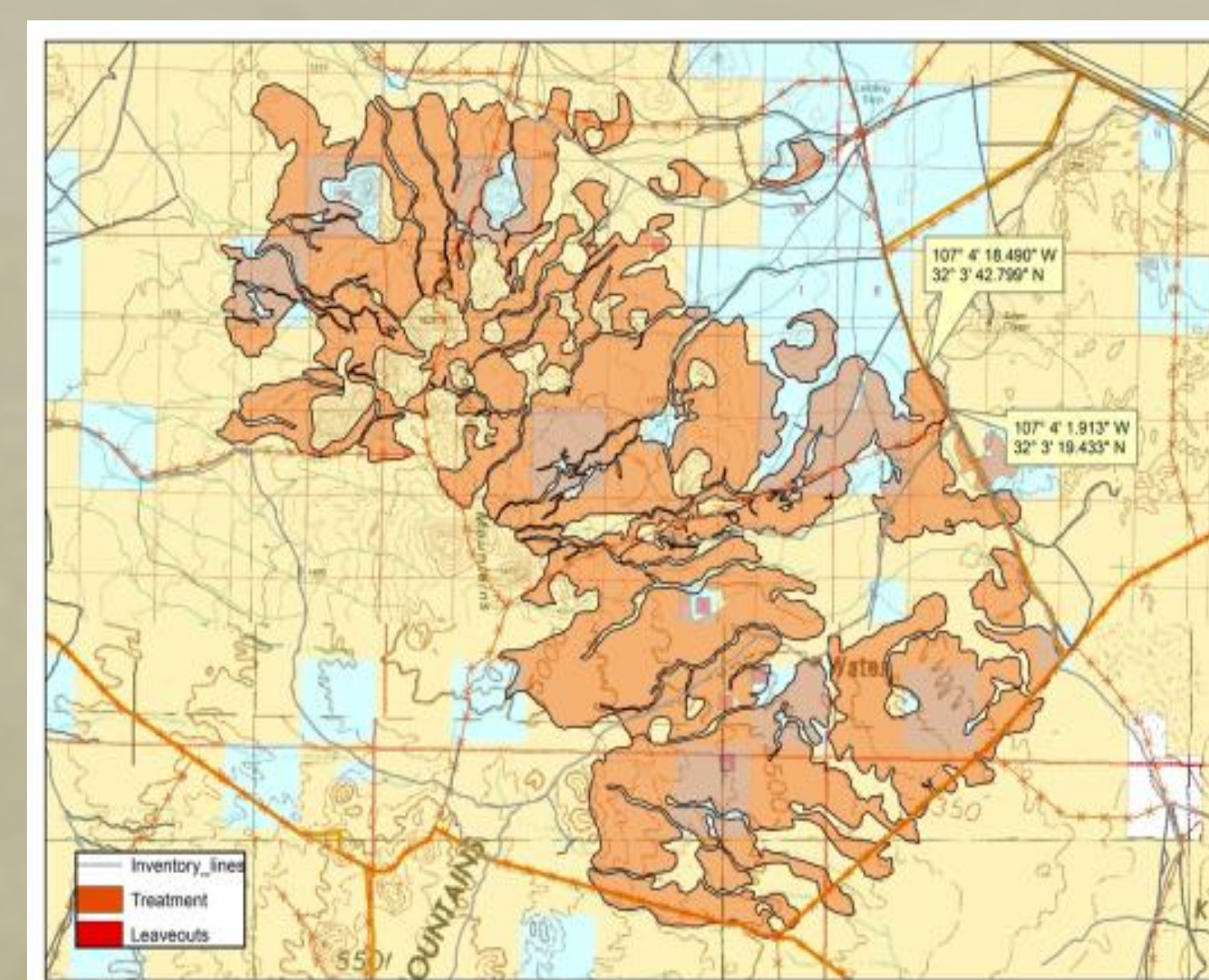
Long term post treatment monitoring will be accomplished via partnership with the USDA Agricultural Research Service, Jornada Experimental Range and BLM. Vegetative responses, as well as grassland bird and small mammal responses will be monitored. Information gathered by researchers will also be utilized to develop a K-12 science education module using the Chihuahuan Desert Grassland restoration theme.

A large portion of the West Potrillo Grassland Restoration Project occurs within a Wilderness Study Area, requiring specific criteria be met to ensure wilderness qualities are not adversely impacted.

The collaborative effort of all parties involved was recognized by the New Mexico Chapter of the Society for Range Management's 2011 "Excellence in Range Management" award.



Project Implementation



The West Potrillo Mountains Grassland Restoration Project is a unique example of the BLM working with several partners, cooperators, and supporters. The key individuals, organizations, and agencies that played a key role to make this project a success include:

BLM Resource Specialists:

Steven Torrez - Wildlife Biologist
Phil Smith - Rangeland Management Specialist
Lane Hauser - Range Improvement Coordinator
Ray Lister - Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist
Tom Phillips - Supervisory Recreation/Cultural Specialist

Grazing Permittee - Williams Family Ranches, LLC, Dudley Williams

NM Quail Inc. - John Moen, President

Dona Ana Soil Water Conservation District

New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts - Ken Leiting

NM Department of Game and Fish - Pat Mathis

USDA ARS Jornada Experimental Range:

Brandon Bestelmeyer, Research Ecologist
Laura Burkett, Range Technician

NM Wilderness Alliance - Nathan Small, Conservation Coordinator

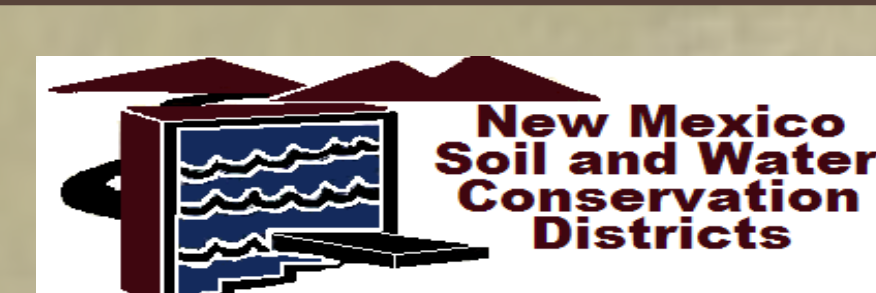
NM State Land Office - Michael Quintana, District Resource Manager



Continuing partnerships with research institutions have been made to conduct long term vegetation and biodiversity monitoring in the treatment area.

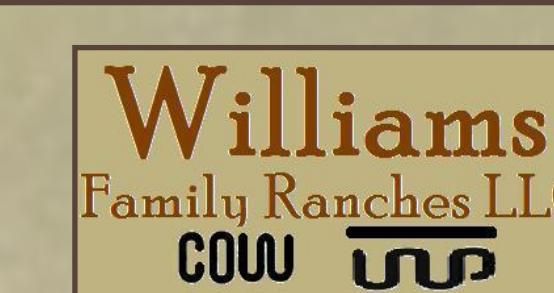


Key Partnerships



"The significant scale of this work would not have been possible without the many partners participating in Restore New Mexico."

Linda Rundell
State Director
BLM - New Mexico



"... Restore New Mexico is much greater than the sum of its parts. It's taking a vision and making it happen on the ground, restoring the landscapes that lift our spirits and define our character."

Linda Rundell
State Director
BLM - New Mexico

http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/restore_new_mexico.html